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wrecked and the funds, exhausted. Langley said, "Failure in the aerodrome itself, in its engines there had been none: and it is believed that it is at the moment of success, and when the engineering problems have been solved, a lack of means has prevented a continuance of the work." If he had only thought of mounting his aeroplane on bicycle wheels! what a small thing prevented his success. One recalls the canoe episode on the Maine lake. I know of no more touching episode in the history of invention. He had success in his grasp. A critic has said that he ought to have stopped with his mechanical model; for he had not the engineering skill to perfect his invention. It seems to me that this is not true. Langley combined with his theoretical knowledge of mechanics a remarkable practical skill. His aeroplane afterwards flew. Perhaps he underrated the necessity of practical experience in balancing even after a successful launching. With what exultation of spirit he would survey today the progress of aviation. It is one of the unintelligible things in this life that this exultation was denied him; for he was a man especially fond of distinction. He failed for the want of a few thousand dollars; and the United States Government is now appropriating millions for aeroplanes. In the Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections for 1907, will be found a complete bibliography of Langley's papers. It contains 284 references.

JOHN TROWBRIDGE.

THOMAS RAYNESFORD LOUNSBURY (1838-1915)

Fellow in Class III, Section 2, 1896.

I

Thomas Raynesford Lounsbury, son of Thomas and Mary Janette (Woodward) Lounsbury, was born on January 1st, 1838, at Ovid, New York, where his father was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. At the age of seventeen he entered Yale College; he took his degree in 1859. His undergraduate career was distinguished by sundry prizes and other such recognitions of literary propensities. After graduation he was for some time employed on the not too mature staff engaged in preparing Appleton's New American Cyclopaedia. From 1862 to 1865 he served as an infantry officer in the Civil War,

during the latter part of this time as Adjutant of the Draft Rendezvous at Elmira, New York, which was also a depot for Confederate prisoners. The next five years he passed in school teaching, private tutoring, and eager study, particularly of the English language and literature. In 1870 he returned to Yale, as instructor in English at the Sheffield Scientific School; the next year he was made professor of English there. As such he continued his work, scholar and teacher alike, for thirty-five years, retiring in 1906. He died at New Haven, on April 9th, 1915.

For a long time he had then been recognized not only as one who will hardly be forgotten among the worthies of Yale but as a scholar of national and international importance — after the death of Professor Child, of Harvard, in 1896, undisputedly the most eminent master of his subject in the United States. This eminence was attested by many degrees and similar honors. He was Doctor of Laws of Yale, of Harvard, and of Aberdeen; he was Doctor of Letters of Princeton; and, to go no further, he was from the first a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He had been made a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences April 8, 1896.

Apart from occasional writing, his publications were not precocious. The first which he chose to record in *Who's Who* was a compact handbook concerning the History of the English Language, published so late as 1879. In 1882 — though it bears the date of the following year — appeared his *Life of James Fenimore Cooper*, in the American Men of Letters Series. In 1891 came what is generally thought his most important work, the three-volume *Studies in Chaucer*, affectionately dedicated to Professor Child. Between 1901 and 1906 came the three volumes which he grouped together under the title of *Shakespearean Wars: Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, Shakespeare and Voltaire, and The Text of Shakespeare*. Meanwhile, in 1904, he had extended into a small volume papers originally written for occasional purposes, concerning *The Standard of Pronunciation in English*. This was followed in 1908 by a similar but rather more extensive book on *The Standard of Usage in English*. In 1909, he completed this third of his trilogies by his book on *English Spelling and Spelling Reform*. In 1911 appeared his four lectures, originally given at the University of Virginia, on the *Early Literary Career of Robert Browning*; in 1912 followed that most compact and satisfactory of anthologies, *The Yale Book of American Verse*. His last considerable publication was posthumous: *The Life and Times of Tennyson (From 1809 to 1850)* he had left unfinished; in December, 1915, only eight

months after his death, it was printed under the supervision of his junior colleague and devoted friend, Professor Wilbur Cross.

In 1871, Professor Lounsbury married Jane, daughter of General Thomas J. Folwell, of New York. With one son, she survived him.

II

It is happily characteristic of Professor Lounsbury that when he retired from the drudgery of teaching, in 1906, a neighbor more than twenty years younger than he sent the Yale Alumni Weekly a column touching on the humanity of him just as a neighbor. There have rarely been men more stoutly themselves; but you could hardly meet him, even occasionally and casually, without a contagious sense of human fellowship. As one thinks of him now, the first thought is that he was of the few who can unwittingly help fellow beings to be better fellows. His appearance was by no means academic; rather his burly vigor bespoke the old soldier. So late as 1915, when he was more than seventy-five years old, he allowed to stand in *Who's Who* the statement that his favorite recreations were cycling and tennis. A tall man and a large, sandy-haired and bearded, with heavy-lidded eyes which troubled him in his later years, he might have looked ponderous, if he had been less alert. He was voluble yet affable; whether you talked back to him or not, you felt as if you did. His boundless range of information was always at his command. He had the buoyant potency of a great scholar; he could master books and they could not master him. No man was ever more free from the insidious bonds of pedantry. Life is real, books are the record of past realities; to understand books we must take them for what they truly are — the data from which imagination can revive aspects of life no longer visible to living men. Your pedant stops at the letter, imprisoned in the walls of his library; your scholar finds his library an open gate to worlds he can never explore too eagerly. He loves his path, no doubt, but mostly because it is the way to boundless journeys of discovery; and discovery is discovery, be it of a new flower or of a new continent or planet. We may seem to be straying from a life which passed half its allotted span in the teaching of boys at an American Scientific School; yet those who remember Professor Lounsbury can hardly help, from the very force of his memory, starting away from daily commonplace.

How tremendously commonplace the circumstances of his professional work must have been, anyone who has taught undergraduates

must sadly know. The independence of Professor Lounsbury's nature kept him apart from the rigid curriculum which persisted at Yale College during the greater part of his teaching years. In the Scientific School he was more free to deal with his still new and somewhat suspected subject of English than he could have been in the college itself; but this very freedom brought its penalties. Students of science, at least in his time, have been so largely because they would not take the trouble to make themselves students of the humanities; and students of English, as a class, have been so largely for the reason that they could thus dispense with the vexatious need of learning any other language than their own. Until very late in Professor Lounsbury's career as a teacher, there was little graduate study of English at Yale: even now, your graduate student of English anywhere is seldom inspiring. So perhaps only men who have had to teach English at a Yankee college can fully enjoy two of his remembered comments on this task. The first is in his life of Cooper (p. 7), who was for a while an undergraduate at Yale. "We need not feel any distrust," writes Lounsbury, "of his declaration that little learning of any kind forced its way into his head. Least of all will he be inclined to doubt it whom extended experience in the class-room has taught to view with profoundest respect the infinite capability of the human mind to resist the introduction of knowledge." The second of his comments on pupils, though perhaps legendary, is at once equally characteristic and more familiar. Towards the close of an unusually restless hour, he is said to have admonished his class in some such words as these: "You must stay with me a little longer. I have a few more pearls to cast before you."

And pearls they were, those words of his, whether they concerned learning or sport, reminiscence or what a less robust nature would have found the benumbing chill of college conservatism. He was a Yale man to the core, and lived to be in his later years among the most secure of Yale worthies in the hearts of men that loved Yale. The way in which he instinctively combined simplicity with distinction breathed the best spirit of the college which was his from boyhood to the last. He was a born and a trained lover of literature. Above all, though, he was a pitiless enemy of literary cant; he never forgot the supreme truth of fact; and no one ever sought or asserted fact with more sturdy common-sense. Before his time, the teaching of English at Yale had been mostly concerned with formal rhetoric and oratory. His own first teaching directed the attention of his pupils straight to the texts of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Dryden, and of

Pope — poets who have survived so surely that, whether you care for them or not, their works are touchstones by which those who will may test the worth of works lesser or newer. And what he thought of the trivial conventions of petty literary grace may be gathered from the saying attributed to him by Professor Cross, that “a man who hasn’t brains enough to write a grammar writes a rhetoric.”

Those who knew Professor Lounsbury, even though slightly, can never forget him. No one can remember him without interest, few without affection.

III

Whoever, with such memory, turns now to the books where he has left his record for future times must feel, more than usual, how little books, even though deeply characteristic, can preserve the atmosphere of a memorable personality. Something similar is true of two Harvard worthies — Lowell and Norton. Lowell’s poems and essays are securely placed among the standards of literature in America, Norton’s books and letters are lasting records of the most gracious American culture. But Harvard men who studied under Lowell or Norton, or who know them as they lived and moved in the Cambridge they had seen transformed from a unique college town to populous suburban commonplace, grow impatient of their printed utterance. This is doubtless good; but the men themselves were so much better that the sense of their loss grows heavier with each page. Lounsbury’s books are as characteristic as either of theirs — not least for his disdainful disregard of conventional literary pretension. He wrote, as he talked, volubly and idiomatically. He did not attempt to make literature; he was content to know it, to love it, to assert the standards of it and to maintain them with all the power of his insatiable study and of his unswerving common-sense. No man ever had a sounder appreciation of literary and poetic values; none could insist on them more sanely or more valiantly. When he came to discussing them, however, he was a little too apt to take them for granted. This, as one reflects, was evident in his talk. There one felt nothing to seek; if he strayed a bit from things themselves worth while to things about them, a word or two would recall him to the heart of the matter; oftener, gladly yielding to the sweep of his utterance, one was content for the moment to take for granted with him that there was no need to dwell on what we all knew anyway. The pitiless impersonality of print, however, reveals too clearly this error, if indeed it be not a foible, of his strength.

A shrewd contemporary of his, at another college, was apt to say that books are alive, that books about books are anaemic, and that books about books about books are still-born. In his writing as in his talk Lounsbury was red-blooded and always animated. As one turns the pages of his volumes, though, one sometimes suspects that the greatest wonder of all about him is that he could manage to make a constant impression of vigor in works which may so nearly be generalized as books about books about books.

This is not the case throughout, to be sure. His little handbook on the English Language, compact from the conditions of its limits, states the facts as they were ascertained in 1879 so firmly and with such animation that after forty years it still seems an authority. His *Life of Cooper* is an excellent piece of literary biography, where you may find not only faithful portraiture set in veracious historic background, and supplemented by compact critical comment, but now and again pearls of such water as that which we took from its setting a little while ago. His *Studies in Chaucer*, generally deemed his principal work, may justly be called diffuse and disorderly; but, for all their voluble vagrancies, they unquestionably accomplish the essential task of books about books. They make you eager to read the poet they concern, impatient again to open his pages which they irradiate with countless gleams of new light, and above all aware of what manner of human being that poet was, the greatest gentleman who ever made English poetry. When we come to Lounsbury's second trilogy, however, which has to do with Shakespeare, the case is different. Shakespeare lurks in the background; the foreground is full of faintly reanimated folks who between his time and ours have had opinions about him. The tireless erudition displayed throughout is beyond compare; Lounsbury read more extinct criticism, you grow to feel, than would have seemed within the range of human power. What is more, his own vigor gives his statements about this forgotten stuff a semblance of animation. But, after all, discussions of such things as the *Unities* and as *Eighteenth Century Views* do not lead you into the heart of Hamlet or of *The Tempest*; and if Voltaire had done nothing but first praise and then jealously blame the greatest of English poets we should trouble ourselves no more about Voltaire; and when it comes to *The Text of Shakespeare*, the matter leads us rather to the murky depths of the *Dunciad* than either to anything Pope lives by or a bit to the poetry with which Theobald dealt so faithfully as to rouse Pope's hateful spite. Lounsbury's *Virginia lectures on the early career of Browning*, too, tell you not so much

about Browning as about what critics thought of him. And Lounsbury's unfinished study of Tennyson leaves on your mind more distinct notions of English reviewing before 1850 than of either the poetry or the poets with whom the reviewers concerned themselves. Your notions of Tennyson himself meanwhile grow rather hazier than clearer, and in the end you are not eager to clear them up.

On the whole, *The Yale Book of American Verse* gives one the best notion of how admirable the critical sense of Lounsbury really was. There are some thirty-five pages of discursive introduction, nowhere more sturdily his own than where he touches on our national hymns, the *Star-Spangled Banner* and *America* (pp. xlii-xliv). There are some five hundred and fifty pages of selections from American verse, beginning with a hymn by Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) and ending with two longish poems by William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910). The pages are admirably printed and widely spaced. As should always be the case with poetry, they tempt the eye to linger and the mind to read at leisure; and, as there are extracts, sometimes rather long, from the work of fifty-two nineteenth century poets, there is not too much of anybody. The very mention of our national hymns, and of the names which open and close the selections, is enough to remind us that these range widely in point both of quality and of renown. The two sure things about the book are first that whoever knows our national characteristics cannot help feeling it admirably and comprehensively American, and secondly that it demonstrates as hardly ever before the merit of poetry in nineteenth century America. Thus dealing directly with literature, Lounsbury could surely make others know afresh what literature is.

His disdain of conventional rhetoric somewhat obscures this power. Professor Cross, in his pious introduction to the posthumous volume on Tennyson, draws a touching picture of Lounsbury, in his later years and with sadly weakened eyes, writing in the dark, and carefully considering the turn of his phrase. Except for incessant clearness, one would hardly suspect from his published work that he could ever have been haunted by any such artistic conscience as is here implied. In general his style seems carelessly diffuse; and his passion for the neuter pronoun was almost unholy. To take a casual example of this, he was capable of writing and of leaving unchanged in his proof such a sentence as "It is equally evident that it is Shakespeare's practice which is the one followed upon the modern stage" (Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, p. 13). Amid the very pages blurred with these rhetorical inadvertences, however, you will constantly

find passages to prove that if he had chosen he might have been a master of style. Here are two or three, taken at random as one reads. Writing of Chaucer's character of the Knight, he closed a paragraph thus: "He must be a man of honor, he must be a man of courage, above all, he must be a gentleman in his feelings, his instincts, his aspirations. He might be stupid; it was incumbent upon him to be chivalrous. If his virtues were heroic, his vices accordingly had to be of the same stamp. They must be of a bold and open sort. The knight could be licentious and arrogant and even cruel; the thing forbidden him was to be petty and mean and false." (Studies in Chaucer, II, 481-2). Again, he could summarize Warton's opinion of Chaucer in words like these: "In his eyes Chaucer was a Goth — a Goth of genius, to be sure — but still a Goth. Being a Goth, he had not the severe self-restraint of the moderns, their chastity of diction, their propriety of manner; in fine, their Art." (Studies in Chaucer, III, 250). Better still, when touching on an edition of Chaucer once projected by Samuel Johnson, he thus concludes, "Scholarship suffered no loss by the failure to carry out a scheme which was probably never more than vaguely thought about. Literary criticism certainly has. An edition of Chaucer by Johnson could never have been an authority, but it would always have proved an entertainment." (Studies in Chaucer, I, 299). You must search far and long to find criticism or parody better than that.

Another feature of his learned books bespeaks if not literary conscience at least literary instinct. One may fairly doubt whether any other American scholar of the nineteenth century was capable of disfiguring so few pages with footnotes. On general principles, everybody would probably agree that what belongs in a book ought to be there and that what does not belong there ought to be left out; in general practice, the Germanic passion of American scholars for annotating their own texts rivals Lounsbury's passion for the neuter pronoun. Lounsbury's repugnance for this kind of troublous cant was part of his pervasive common-sense. He carried it, indeed, almost to excess. More than once, as you read his torrents of authoritative statements, you would be glad if he had given you more references to supplement or to verify what he says. All the while, you rejoice that when he chose to say anything he said it out loud and not in the whisper of small print.

Lounsbury's third trilogy comprises his most nearly popular work. Originally written for Harper's Magazine, or other similar periodicals, his papers on Pronunciation in English, on Usage in English, and on English Spelling at once delighted the cock-sure and enraged the metic-

ulous. He expanded them into three small volumes which appeared between 1904 and 1909. In the matters of pronunciation and usage, he stood firm on the ground that the true question concerning any language still unummied is not what ought to be the case but what has been the case and what is. In the matter of spelling, his extensive reading, his knowledge of language and his impatience of pedantic pretence combined to transform his common-sense into that semblance of folly which, throughout the whole range of human activities nowadays, claims authority under the magic name of reform. So far as English spelling goes, most will agree that there has never been any long settled practice, and the practice imposed by nineteenth century proof readers is little better than nonsense. Wherefore, you may feel for once, here is a region where common-sense and general principles may unite. Perhaps so. What the reformers forget is the essential amenity of acknowledged manners — the civilizing effect of not doing a thing for the simple reason that it is not done. Good men have been known to raise a casuistical question as to whether your word of honour can fairly be held binding when honor is spelt without the *u*. The spelling-books of the nineteenth century are often condemned as training only that unimportant phase of the mind, the memory. So they do, if you are thinking only of the reasoning powers in contrast. There is another aspect of the whole question, though. To master the luxuriant unreason of modern English spelling, any child must develop to considerable degree the power of accurate observation. More than a few old-fashioned teachers are apt to believe, unreasoningly if not unreasonably, that the training thus given children has had a value beyond reason.

Not to dispute, now and then, would be not to admit the mood which Lounsbury excited and loved to excite. Throughout his books you may often find yourself reluctant to agree; and the very sturdiness of his voluble assertions may arouse a temper of denial. As he loved sport, he loved contest, for its own invigorating sake; but he was a true sportsman, he played fair. His writings, as we have said, do not express anything like the fulness of his contagious humanity, yet, as one thinks of them altogether, one cannot avoid the glad knowledge that, like his human self, these writings are strong, honest, manly, simple and masterly in their union of erudition with common-sense.

IV

One dare hardly hope, no doubt, that his books will long survive, except as old mile-stones in the interminable journey of scholarship.

His memory, more living now than any of his living words, must fade as those who knew him pass. Yet his life has done work which must endure. Whether he attracted or repelled, he never left indifferent those whom he influenced, and he influenced almost all who came within his range. Among the scholars and teachers who have made the study of the English language and of English Literature important in American universities, he was second only to Professor Child, his elder by half a generation. Child, like Lounsbury, may soon be little more than a name, or the shadow of a name. But the spirit of them lives and shall live so long as the language and the literature they loved and taught are studied and taught and loved.

BARRETT WENDELL.

CHARLES SEDGWICK MINOT (1852-1914.)

Fellow in Class II, Section 3, 1882.

Charles Sedgwick Minot was born in Boston, December 23, 1852. His parental home, five miles from Boston, and comprising about thirty acres, stood on the edge of the forest area which then stretched from Forest Hills on the north to the Blue Hills and the Great Ponds in Canton and Braintree on the south. The region even now, as seen from the summit of Blue Hill, is largely a low forest, most of it of second and third growth, with areas of cleared land in which are small towns and villages, with farm lands about them. There are interspersed fine villas inhabited by wealthy Bostonians, and most of the Forest is now included in the Metropolitan Park system and will be preserved. There are extensive low marshy flats, subject to overflow, along the Neponset River, and included in the forest there are large areas of swamp. Fine trees, elms, oaks, ash, beeches and pines abound in the region, but the trees in the forest areas are generally small. The flora and fauna are abundant and diversified. It is a stimulating region even now to a boy who has the capacity to see things and joy in seeing the wonder and beauty in nature. In Minot's boyhood the region must have been much wilder and hence more interesting than now. In such surroundings the boy grew up and early acquired the love of nature, the capacity of seeing, and the scientific curiosity to find out the meaning of the things he saw, which distinguished the life of the man.